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THE JOHN BROWN LETTERS.

FOUND IN THE VIRGINIA STATE LIBRARY IN 1901.

(CONTINUED)

J. A. COPELAND TO ELIAS ———.

Charleston, Va., Dec. — 1859.

Dear Elias:

I have just received your kind and affectionate letter of the 7 Inst. and I now take my pen to answer you which may be the last time that I shall be able to write you.

Ah my dear friend if you could but know and feel the pleasure and comfort which your letter brought me, you would thank God that you had written. It came to me bringing in its words, light to my heart, and consolation to my mind which makes the *Gallows*, the dark and gloomy gallows, with all its terrors, appear in more glorious and resplendent light than that which surround the throne of a king. For the throne presents only worldly happiness and Glory mix thoroughly with the bitterest dreeds of woe and misery to him who ascends it to wield the kingly scepter. While the gallows presents to those who die upon it for having done their duty to both God and man not only glory and renown in this world but opens the road to bliss and happiness above with angels in heaven where sorrow and misery is not known, and where cruel and unjust men do not exist.

It is true that when I think of the dear, dear friends that I must leave behind that I long to live that I may be with them a little while longer, and when I think of my poor mother and father whose hearts are filled with sorrow at the fate of their poor son, I cannot, let me try as hard as I may, keep from dropping tears, knowing that I might have saved them the misery and woe with which their hearts are wrong, but knowing that they have the sympathy of hundreds who will do all in their power to console them and feeling that they must see that God has ordained it for me to suffer in the cause that I now do suffer in, and knowing that they put their trust in him that they will feel reconciled when I say "Gods will be done not mine."

Dear friend it is true that the outbreak at Harper's Ferry did not give immediate freedom to the slaves of this country but it is the prelude to that great event. For remember at the first commencement of the struggle for the Independence of this country, that the Harper's Ferry outbreak is in every point of view the same. For at the commencement of that struggle the first blood spilt to freedom the American people was that of a negro, poor Cyrus Attuc, and in this the commencement of the struggle for the freedom of the negro slave the first blood spilt was that of a Negro (one who had come to try to free his wife from the cruel hands of her master), Dangerfield Newby. But I will say no more on this point. Now dear friend though in all human probability I will never see you more on this earth, I pray God we may meet in heaven. I bid you struggle on in the good cause never give up. Give my love to all my friend. To your father, sister and brothers and except the same for yourself. I remain now as ever, Yours

sincerely,

J. A. COPELAND.

You must excuse this writing, I write on the back of a book on my knee.

A. R. ALLEN TO GOVERNOR WISE.

[Endorsed] A. R. Allen, detective. Telegram.

[Printed heading] Western Independent Telegraph Line, from Baltimore to Cincinnati, via Baltimore and Ohio R. R. & Marietta and Cincinnati R. R.

This line works directly through to Cincinnati, Sun Iron Building, Corner of Baltimore and South Sts., Baltimore.

Washington, Nov. 12, 1859.

Andrew Hunter, Charlestown:

Arrested man supposed Insurgent, In jail, waiting identification. Governor requested me to telegraph you.

A. R. ALLEN,

Detective Officer.

MARIE G. STERNS TO GOVERNOR WISE.

[Envelope] [MS.] Governor Wise, Charlestown, Va.

[Endorsed] Sterns delivered.

[Post marked] Springfield, Mo.

Springfield, 1859, November 19th.

Gov. Wise:

Dear Sir,—May I ask of you, the favor, of sending to my friend John Brown the enclosed letter, which is merely one, expressive of my sympathy for him, in his present trying situation—if you wish, you can open & read it, but I earnestly beg you, to send the letter to him & oblige, yours

very sincerely,

MARIE S. STERNS.

Gov. Wise, Charlestown, Va.

JOHN L. SNOW TO THOMAS C. GREEN.

[Endorsed] John L. Snow, Detroit. Copy made. Sent Gov., important.

Detroit, Michigan, November 17th, 1859.

Thomas C. Green, Esqr., Mayor Charlestown, Va:

Dear Sir,—A knowledge of certain plans which are likely to affect the peace and well being of our community having come into my possession, I feel it my duty to impart the same to you in order that you may take such precautions as in your judgement you may think proper. Within the last 3 weeks there has been a party of men organizing here for the rescue of old John Brown and his fellow traitors—this being on the borders of Canada is a fit place for such an organization as they have the means of safety at hand by crossing the River also a convenient place for accumulating and storing arms. This party is under the lead of reckless and daring men, some of whom played a prominent part in Kansas, others have served with Walker in Nicaragua, they have a regular and most complete Military organization. And I have the most reliable proof that they now have between 7,500 and 8,000 men enrolled all of whom are sworn to rescue old Brown and his fellow prisoners or die in the attempt. So far as I can judge they are a most resolute and determined body of men and will hesitate at no crime in order to accomplish their

nefarious ends, even the overthrow of the Federal Government has been determined upon should such an act be necessary in order to accomplish their object. The leaders expect to have at least 10,000 reliable men by the 20th of this month and expect to rendezvous near Charlestown on or about the 30th of this month and then and there effect their purpose. They will not travel in a body but like ordinary travelers untill they arrive at or near their destination, when they will form themselves into bodies sufficiently large to resist any force which they suppose the authorities will be prepared to bring against them. Each man is provided with two Revolvers with an extra cylinder each, which gives each man 24 pistol shots, a large Bowie knife and a short Breech Loading, self capping & priming Carbines which can be loaded and discharged 10 times in a minute. These Carbines are made so as to take to pieces and put together with great rapidity and facility, the Barrels being only 18 inches long are taken off and packed in trunks or Carpet Bags, the Stocks are made with hinges so as to fold up in a very small compass and thus enable these men to pack them with their ordinary Baggage. The whole Carbine being so well made and the parts fitting each other so well and going together with springs that one accustomed to their use can adjust them in 30 seconds. These Carbines were manufactured for Old Brown's expedition, but were not delivered as the pay was not forthcoming. Since Old Brown's Capture the wealthy Abolishonists of the north have come forward and paid for them and placed them in the hands of Brown's would be rescuers. I also know that the leaders of this present expedition have been furnished by the same guilty parties with any desirable amount of money for the purpose of carrying out their plans. Their object now seems to be only the rescue of Old Brown and party but being successful in this and with arms in their hands who will for one moment imagine that they will stop short of the liberation of all our slaves. I say our slaves as I am a citizen and native of Kentucky and an owner of slaves, and am only here by the imperative calls of my private business, you nor any other Southerner can imagine the deadly hostility which the majority of these fanatics feel for our institutions. God forbid that they should ever be successfull in their incendiary object. These men are being drilled nightly in the use of their

arms and parties are leaving by every train (as fast as they become expert in the use of the arms) in order not to draw too much attention. I can vouch for all the foregoing facts having visited their depots and seen the men going through their exercises, but I cannot vouch for the following which was told me last evening, that is that there is an organization here in the north now numbering 80,000 who are sworn to know no rest untill they see an end of slavery in all the States of this Union. I give this for what it is worth but from what I know of the feeling of the people of these Northern States I am much more than half inclined to believe that it is true. I know that there is Madness enough here to form ten such organizations and I fear unless the South is warned and armed in time that we shall have one of the most terrific civil wars that ever disgraced the annals of history ancient or modern.

Hoping that you will be able to defeat the present expedition and bring its leaders & projectors to condign punishment, I remain,

Yours Very Respectfully,

JOHN L. SNOW.

S. A. B. TO JOHN BROWN.

[Envelope] [MS.] Capt. John Brown, Charlestown Jail, S. C. Care of Capt. Avis, Jailor. Postmarked Rochester, N. Y. Forwarded from Charleston, S. C.

[Endorsed] S. A. B.

Rochester, Nov. 27, '59.

Dear Brother:

A woman's heart beats in sympathy with thine—I picture to myself your once happy home—I see you at the head of a family—I behold you on the *bended knee* lifting your heart in prayer to the *Most high*—I hear your paternal voice—It has been your highest thought to instil into the hearts of your children a sense of Justice—That has been a prevailing trait of your life—I have seen the storm which has gathered about you—At times the clouds have been dark & tempestuous,—your home has been pillaged—your children taken from your embrace—& yet as I have felt you—your strength has accumulated in proportion to the increase of your labors.—Oppression has presented

itself in its various phases, to your mind, until you have determined to consecrate yourself to the service of bleeding humanity—Nobly I feel you have done your work—You may have misjudged in respect to the strength of the slave power—yet I care not your measures, so long as I feel that your heart was right.—I have watched you, Dear Brother, with more than a Sister's Love—as you were taken from your cell to the place where the judgment Hall sh'd be—The sentence has been passed—The work has been done—I see you wounded, weak in body, yet strong in trust—I invoke upon you the choicest of Heaven's benefactions.

Were it within the circle of my labors I sh'd now be by your side—but I feel that I am at work in the best way to aid my kind—I w'd however as a Sister suggest a few considerations—First I would have you employ an able Amanuensis, that you may give a sketch of your noble life.—I would have you place that manuscript in hands, that would spread it before the public eye—If the Oppressor deny you these privileges, so let it be.—I would have you select your own *Robes* for the last fatal hour.—I would have you clothe yourself in *pure white garments* indicative of your internal condition. If this reasonable request were refused, so let it be.—I would have you prepare for the occasion an Address somewhat as follows—

TO MY COUNTRY MEN.

I die for you—I have finished my mortal work—I leave this form with a firm trust in the justice of the Cause for which I am now to suffer.—In the sight of God & Holy Angels, I declare I am at peace—I love my kind and for my race I have given my all—Oppression may crush me as an individual. But the "Truth tho' crushed to Earth shall rise again—The Eternal years of God are hers"—Let me say to my executioners I am immortal. Over my mortal body you have power—but my *spirit* is beyond your control, & I now declare to you in the presence of this vast assembly, that Heaven helping me I will instantly return with new powers & increased vigor to demolish an institution which is the "*Sum of all Villanies*"—You cannot kill me, but it will be within my reach to kindle a fire which shall burn and which shall consume the evils under which my country is now

groaning. I advertise you then today of my intentions. My murdered Sons still live—My acquaintances are numerous—and thro' this *days act you* are to help break the fetter which binds my kind.—Farewell I leave you—but I leave you only speedily to return—

A Sisters holy sympathy be with you to the portals of Heaven.

Yours

S. A. B.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

BOOKS IN COLONIAL VIRGINIA.

On pages 299-303, Vol. VII, of this Magazine, was published a list of inventories and wills from various Virginia county records, which contained references to books, and which had not before been noticed in print. One of the principal objects of that publication was to show that not only were there some large libraries in the colony; but to demonstrate the fact that the possession of a small number of books was a very common thing.

In regard to the additional list, here printed, it may be stated, as was done in regard to the former one, that it is the result of no exhaustive examination of the records of any county except perhaps Albemarle.

It should also be remembered in considering the subject of books in Colonial Virginia, that the records of a number of the old counties have been entirely destroyed, and that the same fate has occurred to large portions of the records of others.

The names of owners, the counties and the dates are given. The dates are those of recordation of inventory or probate of will.

On page 303, of the article in Vol. VII, was given a number of references to notices of books in Colonial Virginia, which have appeared in print. The following references are additional: *William and Mary Quarterly*, VIII, 18-22, 61, 77-79, 128, 145-